

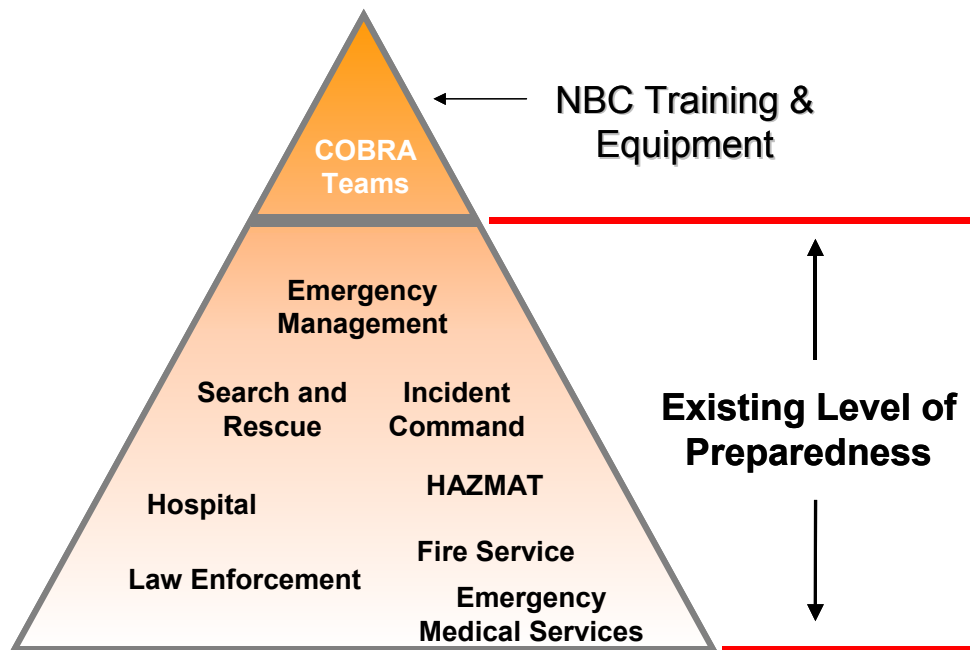
COBRA Response Team Fact Sheet



South Carolina
Emergency Management Division
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What is a COBRA Response Team?

The COBRA Response teams are a key component of the Critical Incident Response System organized by the South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD). The teams are designed to provide specialized assistance to first responders during the initial hours of a critical incident until substantial State and Federal assistance can arrive. This specialized operational assistance is an augmentation to local fire, law enforcement, emergency medical, and public health responders once it is recognized that local assets capabilities will be exceeded and significant State assets will be required.



The COBRA Response Teams are based on a tiered response capability. Advanced COBRA Response Teams are based in four of the largest population centers of the state (i.e., Greenville, Richland, Charleston and Horry Counties). Ten additional Basic COBRA Response Teams are based in jurisdictions with populations greater than 100,000.

COBRA Response Teams are located in the State's largest populated areas and assuming they are not initially affected by a WMD incident, these teams will provide direct assistance to first responders in their assigned jurisdictions. COBRA Response Teams in an unaffected county can be deployed outside their assigned area to assist another jurisdiction. The current threat assessment for the state and the estimated incident impact on affected jurisdictions will determine which and how many COBRA teams are deployed to an affected jurisdiction. The assignment of each team will be based on team capability and the needs of the impacted jurisdiction.

Each COBRA Response Team's sponsoring jurisdiction is setup to contain two teams. One of the teams is capable of being deployed outside of its jurisdiction to provide the direct assistance mentioned above. Although the second team is primarily for providing the

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sponsoring jurisdiction with highly trained personnel and specialized equipment to respond within its own jurisdiction, it could be deployed outside of its jurisdiction if the jurisdiction is under no current threat and the jurisdiction has sufficient responders to cover its own areas of responsibility.

A COBRA team may become involved in critical incidents involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and toxic industrial chemicals in a number of ways:

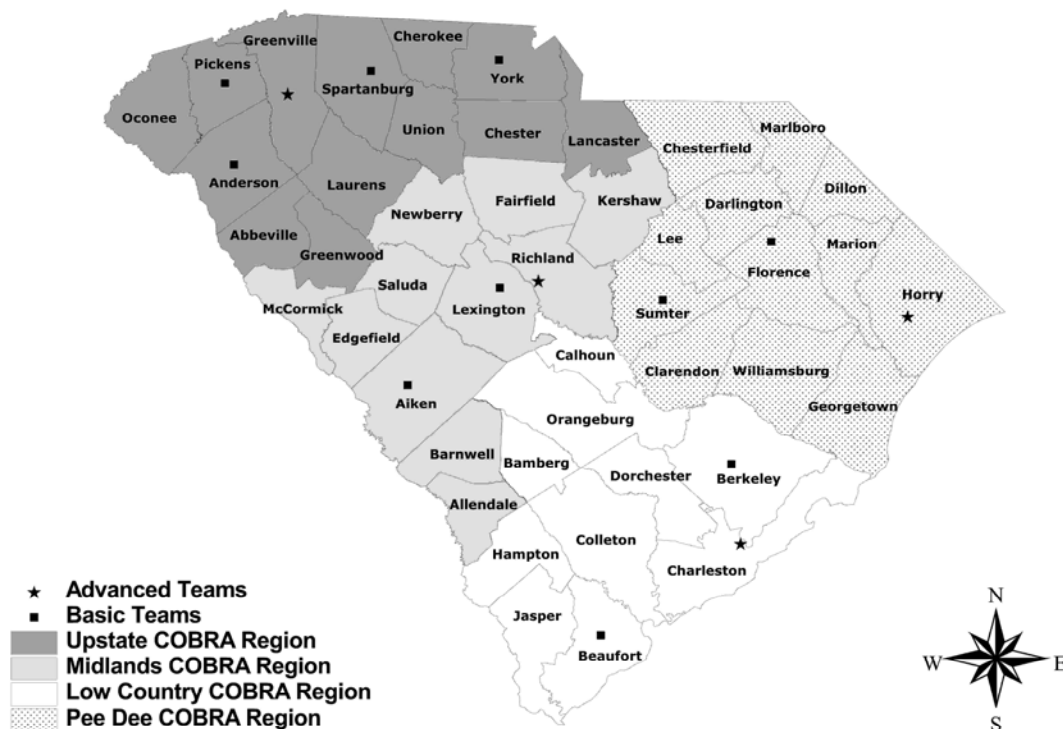
- Alert or deployment instructions from the SEOC
- Direct contact from an adjoining county to provide assistance to a requesting jurisdiction or agency
- Consultation with first responders or local agencies

In general, Advanced Teams will provide primary command and control of all COBRA Team assets in an affected jurisdiction. Basic Teams will provide support to the Advanced Teams when present.

Since the COBRA Team is considered an external asset when responding outside its sponsoring county, the emergency management group of the requesting county should provide/coordinate any assistance required by the COBRA team upon arrival.

Where are the COBRA Teams Located?

South Carolina COBRA Response Teams



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What are the capabilities of the COBRA Teams?

- Conducting on-scene assessments of “Hot” or contaminated zone operations
- Assisting with defining incident control zones by computer modeling of the consequences.
- Advising incident commander on protective actions for responders and the general public
- Coordinating or implementing law enforcement functions for specialized missions needing PPE such as scene reconnaissance, EOD support, search and assessing potential secondary devices, screening patients for terrorists, Special Weapons and Tactics, and crime scene protection
- Providing communication equipment to contact state and federal authorities if necessary.
- Rescue/extrication of first responders and victims
- Conduct specialized decontamination of patients and first responders
- Conducting specialized medical management operations to include triage, treatment, providing specialized pharmaceuticals for first responders, and assisting with patient transport if PPE is required
- Responding to potential or actual secondary sites of possible contamination or attack, at-risk critical facilities or targets, medical treatment facilities or areas

How Are the COBRA Response Teams Organized?

Program Management Group

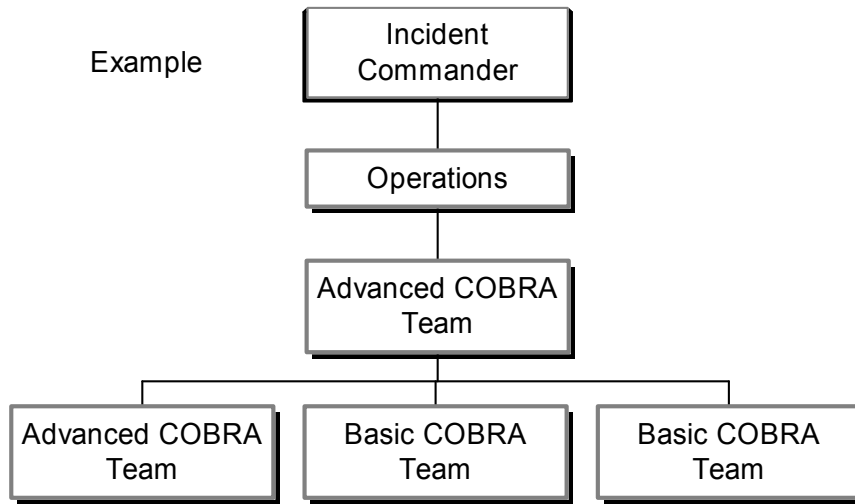
Each team is required to have a Program Management Group (PMG) who is responsible for coordinating with the SC Emergency Management Division on program direction, overseeing its team’s administrative functions, ensuring the team is in a ready-to-respond state, and ensuring interoperability and cooperation with the other COBRA Response Teams.

Team Structure

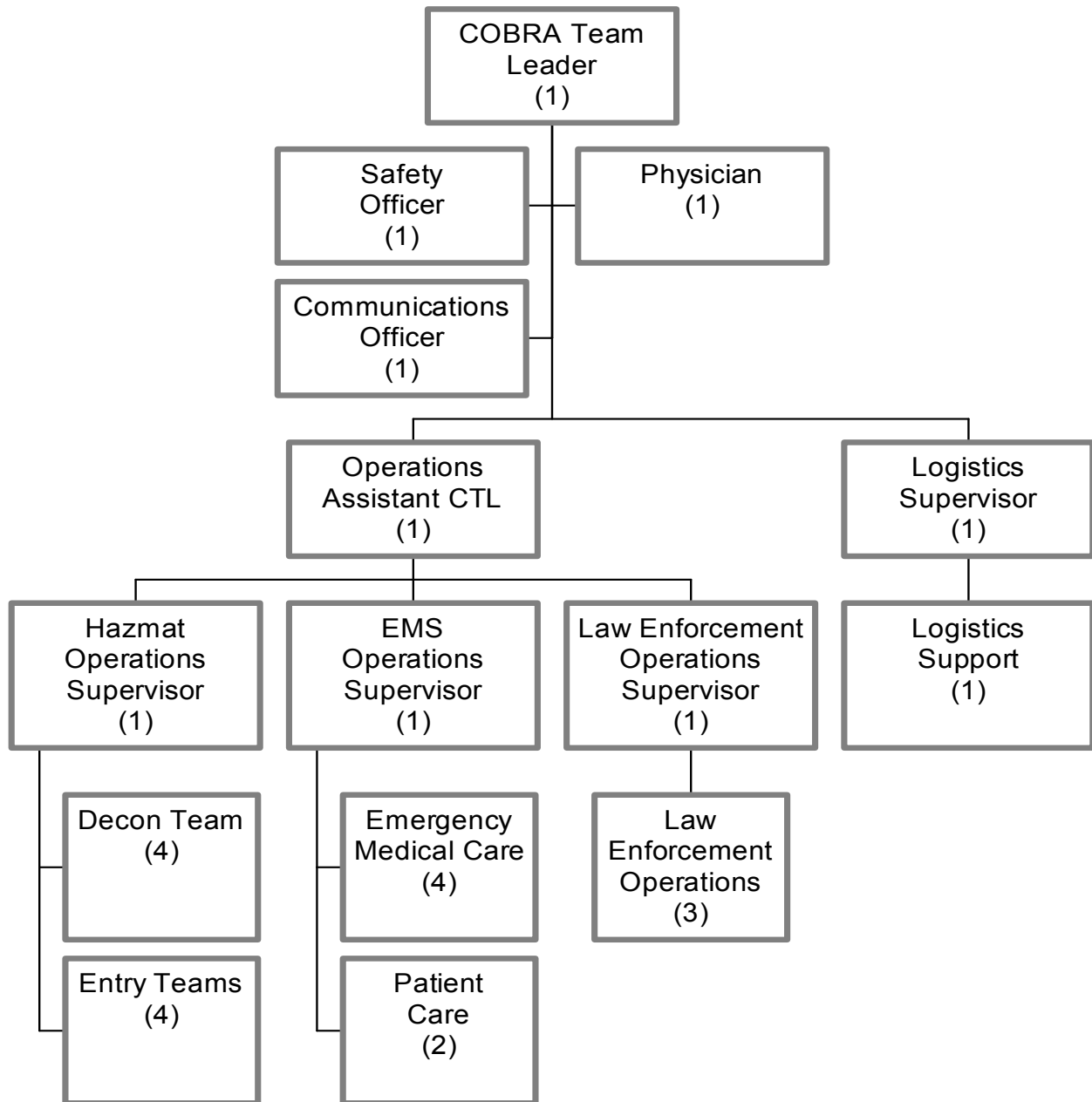
The team functions primarily in support of the local incident command system (ICS). Under the ICS, the team's functions and personnel are primarily used for specialized support and assistance for the on-scene operations as determined by the on-scene incident commander (IC). The CTL, who has ultimate responsibility for team decisions, will direct the COBRA Response Team. Dependent upon the task(s) assigned to the team, the COBRA Team Leader may elect to maintain the team as a unit or may elect to deploy functional elements of the team to the IC for operational support of the local structure

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(i.e., the COBRA Team EMS Operations may be deployed to coordinate directly with the local Emergency Medical Services).



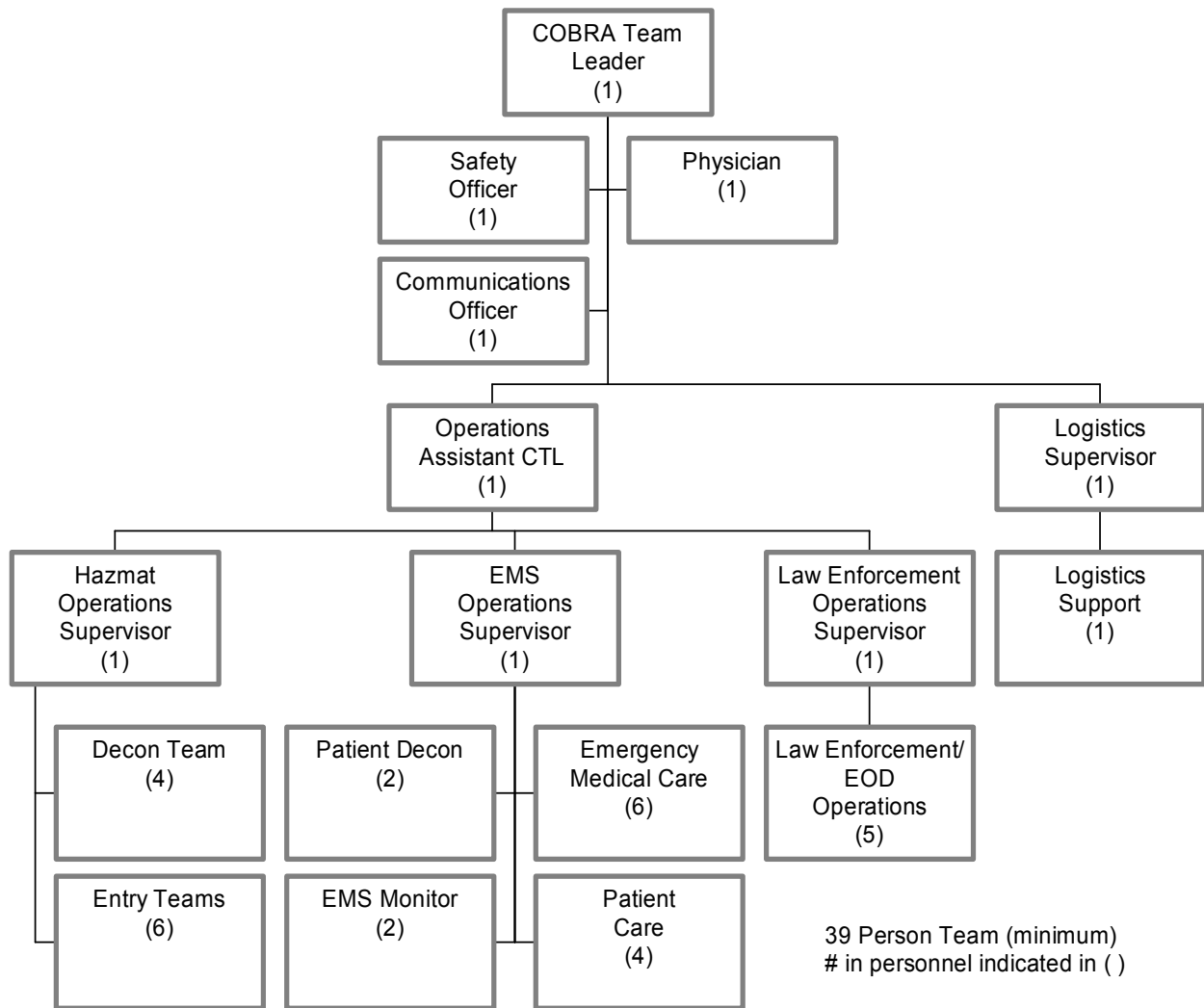
Basic COBRA Response Team



27 Person Team (minimum)
in personnel indicated in ()

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Advanced COBRA Response Team



How are the Teams equipped and trained?

Equipment

Properly selected and maintained equipment is essential to ensure the team is capable of responding to the demanding environment of a terrorist incident. The teams are equipped with state-of-the-art personal protective equipment, detection & monitoring equipment, decontamination equipment, and communications equipment. Much of the equipment may be utilized in non-terrorism/WMD incident with the team's jurisdiction. However, some of the equipment is very specific to use in suspect WMD incidents such as some of the detection equipment and medical equipment.

In order to ensure the teams are properly equipped and are able to efficiently integrate at an incident site, standardized equipment lists have been developed.

Examples to equipment the teams have include:

- Level A thru C PPE ensembles
- Chemical & radiological detection
- Antidote kits
- Technical & mass decontamination
- Medical equipment & supplies
- 800 MHz radios & satellite radio/telephone

Training

The COBRA Response Team is intended to provide a level of technical expertise and proficiency not normally found in current civilian emergency response organizations. To be prepared to respond, team personnel must be skilled in the identification of such agents, self-protection, treatment, decontamination, and operating in a hazardous environment. Personnel must also be skilled in providing technical advice and information to Incident Commanders in order to protect supporting emergency response personnel. Personnel must also possess the knowledge required to provide instruction and assistance to the jurisdictions' supporting institutions and agencies to ensure that once casualties are removed from the incident scene, those providing care can do so effectively and without the threat of becoming secondary casualties.

Each team member is required to undergo a series of classes from professional training organizations that enables them to conduct necessary operations in a terrorism/weapons of mass destruction environment. These professional training courses are sponsored by universities, State and Federal Agencies, and well known training organizations.

Since each team is comprised of personnel from multiple disciplines, each team is required to periodically conduct team level training to ensure proficiency in required tasks. In addition, the teams are required to participate in regional and State level exercises to ensure that training, equipment, and procedures are adequate.

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How Can the COBRA Response Teams Be Requested?

The SCEMD is responsible for overall coordination of the development, maintenance and utilization of the COBRA Response Teams. During acts of terrorism or large scale incidents, the site specific incident commanders and their respective county emergency operations centers are organized to respond to and mitigate the consequences to incidents within their jurisdictions. The SEOC has an overall responsibility to ensure an effective response of state and federal assets to impacted jurisdictions. The SEOC is organized to communicate and coordinate with each respective COBRA Response Team and ensure these assets are utilized to effect the most good to the State.

Requests for COBRA Response Team assistance may be through an existing mutual aid agreement or from the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). The preferred method for requesting COBRA Team assistance is through the SEOC to ensure proper coordination and utilization of the teams and to address competing demands of multiple affected jurisdictions.

Jurisdictions or agencies requesting a COBRA Response Team(s) should initiate their request for assistance with their county emergency management official or designated official, whether the request is made by authority of a mutual aid agreement or through the SEOC.

How Can I Find Out More Information About a Specific Team?

Contact the South Carolina Emergency Management (SCEMD) at:

1. SCEMD Warning Point (803) 737-8500
2. Local County Emergency Manager.